

## Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 SR-02 ORM-03 NIC-01

SY-04 A-01 OMB-01 VO-03 SCA-01 INSE-00 FBIE-00 DRC-01

/117 W

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O R 052130Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3315

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 3647

E.O. 11552X: GDS

TEGS: PINT, PGOV, BL

SUBJECT: POST-MORTON ON COUP ATTEMPT

REF: LA PAZ 3609; LA PAZ 3625

1. IN AFTERMATH OF EARLY MORNING COUP ATTEMPT ON JUNE 5, EMBASSY ATTEMPTING TO PIECE TOGETHER PICTURE OF WHAT OCCURED DURING CRUCIAL HOURS IN WHICH COUP FAILED. INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE INDICATES THAT COUP STARTED WHEN JUNIOR OFFICERS OF TARAPACA REGIMENT ARRESTED COMMANDING OFFICER AND DEPUTY COMMANDER, WHILE SENDING SEVERAL ARMED VEHICLES TO TAKE OVER PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. ACCORD-  
ING TO ONE OBSERVER, THESE VEHICLES WERE FORCED TO STOP AT YPFB GAS STATION ON WAY DOWN FROM EL ALTO TO REFUEL BEFORE PROCEEDING ON TO LAY INEFFECTUAL SEIGE TO PALACE. MEANWHILE, LT. COLONEL RAUL LOPEZ LEYTON TEMPORARILY TOOK CONTROL OF GENERAL STAFF HEAD-  
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QUARTERS IN MIREFLORES BARRACKS, ALTHOUGH LOPEZ WAS HIMSELF

NOMINALLY UNDER DETENTION AT TIME. COUP ATTEMPT FAILED WHEN KEY INGAVI REGIMENT IN LA PAZ DIVIDED OVER WHETHER TO JOIN REBELLIOUS OFFICERS AND ELEMENTS OF TARAPACA REGIMENT; ALSO, UNITS IN ENVIRONS OF LA PAZ EITHER REMAINED PASSIVE IN FACE OF PLOTTERS' EFFORTS OR ELSE MOVED TO PUT DOWN COUP.

2. EMBASSY ALSO INFORMED THAT PRESIDENT BANZER RETURNED TO LA PAZ MORNING OF JUNE 5 AND HAS SINCE REMAINED CLOSETTED WITH ARMED FORCES JOINT COMMAND. MOST URGENT MATTER WHICH BANZER WILL HAVE TO DISCUSS WITH HIS MILITARY AIDES IS DEGREE OF INSUBORDINATION DISPLAYED BY JUNIOR OFFICERS IN TERAPECA AND INGAVI REGIMENTS, WHICH TAKEN TOGETHER WITH PLOTTING OF JUNIOR OFFICERS ELSEWHERE IN COUNTRY PRESENTS SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO VERTICAL COMMAND STRUCTURE AND UNITY OF MILITARY INSTITUTION. PRESIDENT BANZER IS EXPECTED TO ISSUE STATEMENT LATER TODAY ASSURING PUBLIC THAT GOVERNMENT IN FULL CONTROL OF SITUATION. SYMBOLIC OF GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE RETURN TO NORMALITY WERE CESSATION OF SPECIAL TELEVISION BROADCASTS AND GOVERNMENT RETURN OF RADIO NETWORK TO PRIVATE STATIONS SHORTLY AFTER NOON ON JUNE 5.

3. INVOLVEMENT OF MNR LEADER CIRO HUMBOLDT WITH COUP PLOTTERS PROBABLY DUE TO REPORTED RECENT ANTAGONISM BETWEEN BANZER AND HUMBOLDT, PLUS HUMBOLDT'S JUSTIFIED FEARS THAT BANZER PLANNING TO BRING ABOUT HIS REPLACEMENT AS CHIEF OF MNR AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. SOURCES IN MNR STATE THAT PARTY MAY NOW BE LED TEMPORARILY BY TWO MNR SUB-CHIEFS, FORTUN AND ARELLANO, WHILE AWAITING CONVOCAION OF PARTY CONVENTION WITHIN NEXT MONTH OR TWO.

4. COMMENTBC THIS COUP ATTEMPT IS MOST SERIOUS SINGLE THREAT TO BANZER GOVERNMENT SINCE IT CAME TO POWER IN AUGUST 1971. ALTHOUGH MILITARY WILL DOUBTLESS ATTEMPT TO MINIMIZE IMPORTANCE OF JUNE 5 EVENTS, LATTER HAVE REVEALED DEPTHS OF DIVISIONS EXISTING WITHIN BOLIVIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, PARTICULARLY BETWEEN JUNIOR OFFICERS AT LIEUTENANT AND CAPTAIN LEVEL AND SENIOR OFFICERS LOYAL TO PRESIDENT BANZER. FURTHER REPERCUSSIONS FROM THESE EVENTS CAN BE EXPECTED OVER COMING DAYS, BOTH IN MILITARY CIRCLES AND IN LARGER SPHERE OF NATIONAL POLITICS. SHARP CRACKDOWN ON MOST ACTIVE AND POTENTIAL DISSIDENT ELEMENTS MAY BE ONE ETEMENT IN OOVERNMENT REACTION TO REVOLT AND RELATED CIVILIAN- MILITARY PLOTTING; CONTINUING DISRUPTION OF UNIVERSITY LIFE IS PARTICULARLY LIKELY TARGET FOR GOB COUNTER-ACTION.

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## Message Attributes

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